

Ohio COVID Update

March 1, 2021

Holly Gross

Vice President of Government Relations
hollygross@columbus.org

Over the last week, there have been a number of changes to COVID-related government activity impacting businesses:

Ohio Vaccine Update

Governor DeWine announced today that Ohio is expected to receive nearly half a million doses of the vaccine this week, including the newly authorized J&J. In response to the significant increase in supply, DeWine announced a plan expansion to include Phase 1C and Phase 2, covering more than a million Ohioans.

Phase 1C of the vaccine distribution plan will include those with certain medical conditions such as Type 1 diabetes, pregnancy, ALS, and bone marrow transplant recipients. It also includes professionals working in childcare, funeral services, and law enforcement and corrections jobs. With the J&J vaccine coming on the market and supply ramping up, these individuals should be eligible by March 4. Following Phase 1C, Phase 2 will include all individuals ages 60 to 64.

The state is also working to build a centralized appointment website, to streamline the process that is currently spread out across 1,200 provider locations.

Changes to State Venue Restrictions

Sporting and entertainment events will be able to reopen with 25 percent maximum indoor capacity and 30 percent maximum outdoor capacity provided they follow established precautions such as mandatory mask wearing for employees and customers, spectator pathways that allow for social distancing, and seating in groups in six-foot intervals of no more than six people from the same household.

General admission (lawns, standing room, infields) will be permitted if masks are worn and if six-foot distancing can be marked and maintained. The Governor originally stated that revised orders and guidelines will take effect on March 1. However, as of March 1, no order has been signed or made available. Once the language of the order is available, the Chamber will review and post on our website.

New Responsible Restart Ohio guidance for proms, banquets, wedding receptions, fairs, festivals, and parades is also forthcoming.

Federal Update

The U.S. House has passed the H.R. 1319, the American Rescue Plan, on February 27. The bill must still pass the Senate and be signed by the president before becoming law and is subject to change. It includes a number of provisions to provide additional relief:

- \$10 billion to reauthorize and expand the State Small Business Credit Initiative to support small business financing through state governments. This program has previously funded a few successful programs through Ohio Development Services Agency.
- \$25 billion for a new program at the SBA offering assistance to restaurants and other food and drinking establishments. \$5 billion of this amount is set aside for businesses with less than \$500,000 in 2019 annual revenue.
- \$15 billion for the Targeted Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL).
- \$1.25 billion for the SBA Shuttered Venue Operators Grant Program, including a set aside for technical assistance to help entities apply for grants.
- \$195.3 billion set aside for states and \$130.2 billion for payments to localities to mitigate the fiscal effects of the public health emergency.

The Chamber will continue to monitor its progress, and provide additional details to members of how to access these new programs, once enacted.

As a reminder, the SBA has established a 14-day, exclusive PPP loan application period for businesses and nonprofits with fewer than 20 employees that ends on March 9 at 5pm, so Chamber members within that category, whether first or second-draw applicants, should consider contacting your lender asap. Under additional policy changes to the PPP: sole proprietors, independent contractors, and self-employed individuals are to receive more financial support through a revised funding formula, a Portman-backed proposal will allow small business owners with prior non-financial fraud felony convictions to be eligible, as well as non-citizen small business owners, so long as they use an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) to apply. More information available [here](#).

The IRS has also released a [102-page document](#) detailing the changes made to the Employer Retention Tax Credit. Members with questions should contact your accountant or law firm. Questions may also be directed to the Chamber.

Please reach out to [Holly Gross](#) with any questions.

Ohio COVID Update

March 1, 2021

Holly Gross

Vice President of Government Relations
hollygross@columbus.org

UPDATE: The following was released at 2pm on 3/2:

[First Amended Revised Order to Limit and/or Prohibit Mass Gatherings in the State of Ohio, with Exceptions.](#) Changes include:

- Wedding receptions, funeral repasts, proms, and other events, whether or not food is served, at banquet facilities shall comply with previously signed health orders, including those regarding restaurants and facial coverings.
- Events at banquet centers no longer have a 300-person limitation, so long as they comply with other health orders.

[Addenda to Director's Second Amended Order that Provides Mandatory Requirements for Youth, Collegiate, Amateur, Club, and Professional Sports and Provides Mandatory Requirements for Entertainment Venues.](#) Changes include:

- The maximum number of spectators in any indoor sports venue shall be 25% of fixed, seated capacity.
- The maximum number of spectators permitted in any outdoor sports venue shall be 30% of fixed, seated capacity.
- The maximum number of patrons permitted in any indoor entertainment venue shall be 25% of fixed, seated capacity.
- The maximum number of patrons gathered in any outdoor entertainment venue shall be 30% fixed, seated capacity.

Both orders are effective beginning 12:01 p.m. on March 2, 2021

Please reach out to [Holly Gross](#) with any questions.